

MINUTES
MONT VERNON SCHOOL BOARD
June 12, 2008
Mont Vernon Village School Library

Chairman Jayson Darula called the meeting to order at 6:42 noting that it was delayed because the Board wanted to watch the Kindergarten musical performance.

Present:

Mont Vernon School Board –Howard Brown, Jayson Darula, Bruce Schmidt, John Schwope, and Leo White
Administrative Team- Mary Jennings, Nicole Heimareck, Jim Miner, Meredith Nadeau, Kathy Skoglund, and Betty Shankel

Minute Taker – Heather Loewy Nichols

I. CALL TO ORDER

ATTENDANCE

- A. **Principals Report** - Principal Nadeau asked if there were any questions about the written report. In response to a question from Mr. White, she stated there had not been another donation of computers recently.
- B. **Attorney Selection Sub-committee** - Superintendent Jennings explained that the committee had reviewed the information from the ten law firms who submitted responses and have narrowed the field to two firms who they will interview in July.
- C. **Recognition of Board Chair** – Chairman Jayson Darula recognized Leo White for his previous services as chairman and presented him with a plaque and gavel.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Darula asked for public comment and saw none.

III. PUBLIC TIME

Chairman Darula asked if any Board Member wished to remove any of the items from the consent agenda. Mr. Schmidt asked that the minutes be removed.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidt and seconded by Mr. Schwope, to approve items B. Treasurer's Report – April 2008, C. Manifest – April 2008, D. Copier Lease, and E. Nominations of the consent agenda. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Schmidt to approve the minutes of May 15, 2008, as amended. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

- A. **Year One Goal Report** – Nicole Heimark came before the Board and explained the district has been focusing on reading as part of their literacy goals because there are 110 students in the Amherst Middle School who are participating in special reading instruction and because research shows that if one improves reading comprehension they will perform better in all subjects. In order to work on the goal the district focused on professional development, collaborated with the Department of Education and used literacy coaches provided by the DOE. The committee felt strongly about having a K-12 text to promote common language and practice throughout the district and the teachers learned the following six teaching strategies.
- Activate prior knowledge and connect to help children relate better
 - Ask questions to students and encourage children to ask themselves questions as the read
 - Draw inferences
 - Ask students to visualize what is happening in the book
 - Determining the main idea
 - Summarize and synthesize; can the students draw conclusions and summarize the story.

V. PRESENTATIONS

Principal Nadeau discussed the NWEA target growth goals from grades two through six and stated that 74 out of 144 students (or 51%) met the growth target. She also explained that the district met the DIBELS first year goals and the second year goals will increase by 10%.

In response to a question from Mr. Schwope, Principal Nadeau explained this is the first year of goals and measurements and at some point the district will hit a cap and will use a maintenance goal as long as the assessments continue to provide useful data. In response to a question from Mr. Schmidt, Principal Nadeau explained that NWEA is an individualized growth assessment and DIBELS is a

measure of benchmarks based on national norms, and in order to establish local norms they needed a baseline of data from this first year. In response to a question from Superintendent Jennings, Principal Nadeau explained that the faculty has not collectively seen all the data yet but the 5th and 6th grade teachers were disappointed and surprised at the NWEA data. In response to a question from Mr. Schmidt, Principal Nadeau stated that they could send an email blast to give the parents notice of the testing so that the students can be prepared with a good breakfast and nights sleep. Mr. Schwope stated that it is encouraging to see the plan go from concept to practice and then receive results reports. Principal Nadeau noted administrators would be attending a summer workshop regarding how to help teachers use the NWEA results.

A. Science Curriculum Approval –

The Board stated they did not have any questions about the previous presentation.

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidt and seconded by Mr. Schwope to approve the science curriculum. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

B. Parent Handbook Approval –

Principal Nadeau stated that all the previous revisions have been included in this version. Mr. Howard suggested adding a section about the telephone paging policy. The Board discussed the dismissal policy and requested the addition of language that states that any abuse of the policy can result in the revocation of a student's privileges to go home on a bus other than his usually assigned bus.

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidt and seconded by Mr. Schwope to approve the handbook with the amendments as discussed. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

C. Paving Project – Additional Costs

Jim Miner appeared before the Board and explained that in February he gave the Board an estimate of \$31,000 to

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overlay the existing paved area around the school, however after the project went out for bid the cost has increased to between \$53,000 and \$48,000. He noted that he rolled in work to be done at Clark Elementary School and the Amherst Middle School in order to get a more competitive bid. He stated he cut back on the project and put it out for re-bids which are due next week. He explained the cut backs would include reclaiming the pavement instead of filling it, not doing any work on the service roadway towards the back of the school, and laying 2" of binder instead of 2 1/4". He is estimating the revised plan should cost \$35,000, which is still more than the \$31,000 approved in the warrant article. The Board reviewed the different options including future costs, life expectancy, and finances. They noted the opportunity to complete the project as cheaply as possible is now and the voters were in support of the project.

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidt to approve the removal of no more than \$20,000 from the maintenance fund in order to complete the project. After further discussion the motion was withdrawn.

After more discussion the Board decided to hold a public hearing on June 27th at 6:00 p.m. in order to discuss removing the extra funds needed from the present maintenance trust account.

D. Appointment of Auditor –

Business Administrator Betty Shankel explained that an RFP for auditors for a three year term had gone out to 17 firms and only two firms responded; the district's current auditor and another firm that has not had any school districts as clients in the last 10 years. She explained the Amherst Board had appointed the firm of Melanson and Heath for two years and recommended that this Board do the same.

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Schmidt to appoint the accounting firm of Melanson and Heath for the next two years. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

E. Policies – 2nd Reading

IF – Instructional Approach
 IHAK – Character and Citizenship Education
 IHBBA – Limited English Proficiency Instruction
 IHCA – Summer Activities
 IJO – Community Resources
 IJOC – Volunteers
 IKB – Homework
 IL – Evaluation of Instructional Programs
 ILBA – Assessment
 DFA – Investments
 EHB – Data Records Retention
 EHB-R – Retention Schedule

Mr. Brown noted the above referenced policies have been accepted at the SAU level. Chairman Darula asked if the Board wanted to pull any of the policies for discussion and they did not.

A motion was made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Schmidt to approve the above referenced policies. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0)

A. Board Self Assessment

Superintendent Jennings explained that it is policy for the Board to evaluate itself during June and July and noted that each of the Board members and herself had completed the evaluations. The Board discussed which of their current practices work well and which do not. They also suggested that the SAU Board should complete the same assessment.

B. Transportation Planning FY09

Superintendent Jennings asked Business Administrator Shankel to give an update on the transportation committee. Ms. Shankel stated that the committee met and discussed bus routing. She stated that she thinks that the district needs some route optimization and that asking the current provider to optimize the routes is creating a conflict of interest. The Board discussed that previously there was a SAU employee who earned a stipend dealing with the transportation issues but then those responsibilities were rolled into the busing contract. The Board discussed the current situation and whether they should hire an outside group or demand that the current provider optimize its

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operation. The Board noted that there is very little competition in bus service and there is no way to cancel an unacceptable contract in the middle of the year. There was a suggestion that a survey be created to determine why students do not ride the bus.

C. Policies – 1st Reading

IJ – Instructional Materials
 JICD – Student Conduct, Discipline and Due Process
 JFAB – Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students
 KB – Title I – Parent Involvement in Education
 EGA – School District Internet Access for Students
 EGAD – Copyright Compliance
 EHAA – Computer Security, E-Mail and Internet Communications

Principal Nadeau suggested the Board give Bob Kent some recognition for his 17 years of work with the Alpha Program. In response to a question from the Board, Principal Nadeau stated that the Board would need to terminate the program.

Chairman Darula thanked Kathy Skoglund for her years of superb service and professionalism.

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidt and seconded by Mr. Schwope to adjourn the meeting. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0) The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

VIII. OTHER

IX. REVIEW OF MEETING/ ADJOURN